

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 PRS-01 PA-04 CPR-02 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 COME-00 SS-20 NSC-10 L-03 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0488

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: GOA REGULATION ON EMBASSY INFORMATION AND CULTURAL
ACTIVITIES

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED NOTE FROM MFA INFORMATION DEPARTMENT DTD
JAN 20 COVERING NEW GOA "REGULATIONS GOVERNING PUBLICATIONS,
EXHIBITIONS AND PERFORMANCES HELD BY EMBASSIES AND REPRESENTATIVES
OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN."
REGULATIONS COVER PRACTICALLY ALL ACTIVITIES INFORMATIONAL AND
CULTURAL AREAS.

2. REGULATION CHAPTERS TITLES AS FOLLOWS: 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS;
2. NEWS BULLETINS; 3. NEWSPAPERS, PERIODICALS, MAGAZINES, BOOKS
AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS; 4. SHOW WINDOWS; 5. FILMS, EXHIBITIONS AND
PERFORMANCES, PICTURES, SLIDES AND OTHER AUDIOVISUAL
MATERIALS; 6. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS. TEXT RELATIVELY SHORT.

3. REGULATIONS REQUIRE: EMBASSIES TO RE-REQUEST PERMISSION
DISTRIBUTE NEWS BULLETIN, AND REQUEST AGREEMENT USE SHOW WINDOWS;
THREE COPIES NEWS BULLETINS BE DELIVERED MFA PRIOR DISTRIBUTION:
SUBMIT 3 COPIES EACH MFA AND MINISTRY INFORMATION AND CULTURE AND
OBTAIN PRIOR PERMISSION FOR DISTRIBUTION NEWSPAPERS,
PERIODICALS, MAGAZINES, BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS TO AFGHAN
NATIONALS; SUBMIT FOR REVIEW AND OBTAIN PRIOR PERMISSION"FILMS,
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TRANSCRIP OF PERFORMANCES, PICTURES, SLIDES AND OTHER AUDIO-VISUAL

MATERIALS BEFORE THEIR SHOWING TO AUDIENCES ATTENDED BY AFGHAN NATIONALS."

4. PAO AND IO SOUGHT CLARIFICATION NEW REGULATIONS AT MEETING WITH FARHANG, PRESIDENT INFORMATION DEPARTMENT, MFA AND RAFIQUE, VP PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY INFO AND CULTURE ON JAN. 23. TWO HOUR MEETING FRANK BUT FRIENDLY WITH ALL PARTIES INSISTING DESIRE FIND WORKING SOLUTIONS FOR PROBLEMS THAT MAY BE CAUSED BY THESE REGULATIONS. POUCHING TEXT AND MEMCOM INA, NEA, AND CU.

5. PAO BEGAN BY STRESSING BOTH OPERATIONAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIREMENT FOR OUR PROGRAMS. FROM HIS DAYS AT UN FARHANG WELL AWARE USG POSITION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND AVERSION ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF CENSORSHIP. FARHANG ARGUED REGULATIONS BASED GOA CONCEPT SOVEREIGNTY AND DID NOT VIEW REGULATIONS RELEVANT TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ISSUE.

6. THROUGHOUT MEETING PAO SOUGHT OBTAIN VERBAL AGREEMENT FOR INFORMAL PROCEDURES THAT WOULD BOTH SPEAK TO OUR OPERATIONAL NEEDS AND AFGHAN DESIRE REVIEW, I.E. ON PUBLICATIONS AUTOMATIC APPROVAL AFTER SPECIFIED TIME PERIOD WHILE AVOIDING FORMAL CENSORSHIP PROCEDURES. HE REITERATED OFTEN STATED POSITION WE PREPARED AT ANY TIME DISCUSS PROBLEMS AFGHANS MIGHT HAVE WITH ANY OF OUR PROGRAMS. BOTH FARHANG AND RAFIQUE REPEATEDLY STRESSED INTENT AND DESIRE BE FORTHCOMING AND EXPEDITIOUS IN HANDLING FUTURE CLEARANCES, BUT SHOWED LITTLE WILLINGNESS ESTABLISH INFORMAL PROCEDURES.

7. FARHANG MADE CLEAR INTENT OF REGULATIONS WAS CURTAIL AND CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN INFORMATIONAL AND CULTURAL FIELDS BY FOREIGN EMBASSIES. SEVERAL TIMES DURING DISCUSSION HE STRESSED PROCEDURES WOULD BE SAME FOR ALL EMBASSIES. PAO POINTED OUT WHILE GOA ATTITUDE UNDERSTANDABLE, WE MUST VIEW REGULATIONS IN LIGHT EFFECT ACTIVITIES OUR GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN SINCE OURS ARE BI-LATERAL RELATIONS. AT END SESSION FARHANG AGAIN STRESSED GOA INTENDS TREAT ALL COUNTRIES SAME RE INFORMATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND "YOU WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE TREATED ANY WORSE THAN ANY ONE ELSE BUT NO BETTER THAN OTHERS EITHER." PAO OBSERVED USG HAS LONG TREATED AFGHANISTAN IN PREFERENTIAL MANNER IN MANY AREAS OUR RELATIONS.

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8. FARHANG SAID REGULATIONS APPROVED BY CABINET AND ARE NOT SUBJECT CHANGE OR INTERPRETATION THAT WOULD CHANGE THEIR INTENT. ACTIONS SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED IN REGULATION WOULD HAVE TO BE FORMAL, I.E., WRITTEN, BUT WHERE PROCEDURE NOT SPECIFIED INFORMAL ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT BE WORKED OUT. HE AND RAFIQUE COULD ONLY GIVE "CLARIFICATION." THE FOLLOWING "CLARIFICATIONS" WERE RECEIVED.

9. PERIODICALS: PRIOR APPROVAL NOT NECESSARY IF ALL COPIES OF

SMALL DISTRIBUTION SENT TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHEN BOTH NAME AND OFFICE INCLUDED IN ADDRESS. IF SO MUCH AS ONE COPY GOES TO PRIVATE AFGHAN, PRIOR APPROVAL NEEDED. PERIODICALS DISTRIBUTED IN LARGE NUMBER (WHAT IS LARGE NUMBER LEFT UNCLEAR) MUST BE CLEARED IN ADVANCE.

10. SHOW WINDOWS: NOTE MUST BE SENT MFA RE SHOW WINDOWS ALREADY BEING USED. FARHANG ASSURED THIS ONLY PRO FORMA PROCEDURE AND WINDOWS AMERICAN CENTER WOULD BE APPROVED.

11. FILMS: ALL FILMS SHOWN TO AFGHAN NATIONALS MUST HAVE PRIOR APPROVAL MIN INFO AND CULT. (FYI: IN PAST ONLY FILMS THAT WERE AVAILABLE LOAN AFGHAN ORGANIZATION WERE SUBJECT CENSORSHIP PROCEDURE. END FYI) IN FUTURE ALL FEATURE FILMS SHOWN TO AFGHANS WILL NEED PRIOR APPROVAL. WHEN TIME AND LOGISTIC PROBLEMS OUTLINED, FARHANG ALLOWED AS PHONE CLEARANCE ON BASIS OF FEATURE FILM TITLE MIGHT BE ARRANGED. STRESSED, HOWEVER, EACH REQUEST FOR EACH FILM WOULD BE HANDLED AS SEPARATE CASE. PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE WILL NOT BE GIVEN BY CATAGORIES.

12. TRANSCRIPTS OF PERFORMANCES: FARHANG EXPLAINED THIS APPLIED ALL THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES ATTENDED BY AFGHANS. PAO POINTED OUT THIS CLAUSE APPLIED ONLY TO OUR THEATER PROGRAM. FARHANG REPLIED WOULD BE APPLIED OTHER EMBASSIES IF THEY STARTED THEATER PROGRAM.

13. EXHIBITS: AS PRACTICAL MODUS OPERENDI WAS AGREED RAFIQUE WOULD COME TO CENTER FOR "PRELIMINARY" VIEWING EXHIBITS AND PROBLEMS, IF ANY, WOULD BE DISCUSSED.

14. PAO POINTED OUT GOA DID NOT HAVE CAPACITY VIEW VTR MATERIALS. NO REPLY.

15. WHEN IT APPEARED MEETING OVER ON AGREEABLE POINT, FARHANG AND CONFIDENTIAL

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RAFIQUE RAISED THREE NEW POINTS. THEY SAID GOA DID NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH NEW US BULLETIN "BACKGROUND AMERICA," EXCEPT THAT TITLE OF NEWS BULLETIN WOULD HAVE TO BE "NEWS BULLETIN," WHICH WOULD HAVE TO COME AT TOP TITLE PAGE AND BE NO SMALLER THAN ANY OTHER IDENTIFIER USED. FARHANG SAID THIS SMALL DETAIL BUT WAS ABSOLUTELY ADAMANT THIS POINT AND CONTENDED ALL EMBASSIES WOULD HAVE TO USE THIS HEADING. SUBSEQUENT TO MEETING, MFA NOTE RECEIVED AUTHORIZING DISTRIBUTION BULLETIN.

16. RAFIQUE INQUIRED WHAT ELSE EMBASSY PUBLISHED. WHEN TOLD COMMERCIAL NEWS LETTER PUBLISHED ON PERIODIC BASIS, FARHANG SAID INTENT REGULATIONS CLEAR THAT EMBASSY ENTITLED PUBLISH ONLY ONE BULLETIN AND COMMERCIAL AND OTHER BULLETINS WOULD HAVE TO CEASE PUBLICATION OR BE INCORPORATED NEWS BULLETIN.

17. RAFIQUE ALSO RAISED QUESTION RE "KABUL AMERICAN", CLAIMING IT COMPETING WITH "KABUL TIMES" FOR ADVERTISING AND IS DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT FOREIGN COMMUNITY. PAO POINTED OUT THIS INTERNAL EMBASSY ORGAN INTENDED TO INFORM AMERICANS AND OTHERS INTERESTED OF STRICTLY AMERICAN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, WAS IN COMPETITION WITH NO ONE, AND THE REGULATIONS UNDER DISCUSSION AT NO POINT MENTIONED PUBLICATIONS FOR A FOREIGN COMMUNITY OR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN EMBASSIES IN KABUL.

18. OBVIOUSLY IT IS TOO EARLY TO KNOW WHAT PRACTICAL EFFECT ALL REGULATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS WILL HAVE ON INFORMATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AS CURRENTLY CONDUCTED BY THIS MISSION. BEFORE

COMMENTING ON POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, POSSIBLE EFFECT OUR PROGRAM, AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS ANY ACTIONS WE MIGHT TAKE, WE WISH CONSULT OTHER WESTERN EMBASSIES DETERMINE THEIR VIEW AND INTENDED ACTIONS.

19. MEANWHILE, REQUEST SOONEST USG POLICY AND PROCEDURES AS APPLIED OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE LIKE OR SIMILAR RESTRICTIONS AND/OR PERMISSION REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED BY HOST GOVERNMENTS.
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